

We hope the following information will help you if you have pain while in Beaumont Hospital. If you have any questions, please ask a member of your medical team or a member of the nursing staff.

What is pain?

Pain is an unpleasant sensation which can cause physical and psychological distress to a person. Pain is subjective, which means that only you know how pain is affecting you, and your response to pain and pain treatments are unique to you alone. Pain can be divided into acute pain or chronic/persistent pain.

- **Acute pain** is pain that starts suddenly or is the result of an injury, trauma or procedure. This type of pain can last for a few hours or days but generally resolves once the underlying cause is treated. Most acute pain resolves either by itself or with simple treatment.
- **Chronic pain** is pain that lasts for more than 3 months beyond the usual recovery period for an illness or injury, or pain that persists for months or years as a result of a chronic condition (e.g. arthritis, back pain, migraines). Chronic pain can be mild or severe. Unfortunately, for some patients' the cause of chronic pain is not always identified and we simply treat the pain as best we can.

Chronic pain can have a huge impact on those who develop it – please refer to our booklet **Pain Management: A Beaumont Hospital Information Booklet** for more information about chronic pain management. The booklet can be found on our Beaumont Hospital Website on the Department of Pain Management page.

How will your pain be managed while in hospital?

- Your medical team or nurse will give you information about your pain and pain management while you are in hospital.
- Your pain will be assessed regularly while you are in hospital.
- Based on your pain assessment and your ability to cough, self-care and mobilise while in hospital, a pain management plan and goals for relief will be discussed with you.

Pain assessment while in hospital

You will be asked regularly to describe your pain on a scale of 0 – 10 (0 = no pain at all and 10 = the worst pain imaginable) while in hospital. You will also be asked to describe your pain. You can let your nurse know the following about your pain:

- **Location:** where is your pain? Does it spread or move to any other part of your body? Can you point to where your pain is?
- **Quality:** What does your pain feel like – is it dull, sharp, stinging, sore, burning, aching, cramping or shooting?
- **Intensity:** Is the pain constant or does it come and go?

How will your pain be relieved while in hospital?

Medication and other treatments can be used to relieve and manage pain. Medication will be prescribed by your doctor or nurse prescriber and can be given in a variety of different ways:

- By mouth
- By rectum
- By injection or infusion

- By epidural infusion
- By skin patch

Your medical team and nurse will discuss with you the best way for you to receive pain medication while in hospital. If you require medication when you go home, you will be given a prescription before being discharged.

Non medication techniques that might help to relieve pain include:

- **Relaxation:** (e.g. deep breathing exercises) help relieve pain by reducing muscle tension and anxiety. Relaxation techniques can be found on the Beaumont Hospital website, on the Department of Psychology page.
- **Distraction:** reading a book, listening to music, watching TV or a movie can help to focus your mind away from your pain.
- **Skin stimulation:** e.g. massage, pressure, hot or cold compress can help to lessen pain.

How can you help yourself to feel more comfortable and reduce your pain while in hospital?

- Always ask for help if you need it – tell your nurse or doctor if you are in pain.
- If you regularly take pain medication at home, please tell your nurse or doctor what pain you normally experience and what medication you take.
- Never take your own pain medication while in hospital without discussing this with your nurse or doctor. This is important so that you do not take more than the recommended daily dose of a medication (e.g. medications containing paracetamol or non-steroidal anti-inflammatories).

- Ask for pain relief as soon as pain or discomfort starts. It is important that you do not wait for the pain to be really intense before asking for pain relief. Regular pain relief can help you to keep on top of your pain.
- If you are taking your pain medication regularly and are still finding it difficult to cough or move, please tell your nurse as you may need extra pain medication or a different pain medication to be prescribed.
- If you are for physiotherapy, have to mobilise or have a dressing change and you think that it may be painful – ask your nurse to give you your pain medication in plenty of time for it to be working. This is usually 30 – 45 minutes before a painful activity.
- If you need to cough or laugh you can reduce any pain these activities might incur by supporting your abdominal muscles (or wound/s), by placing a hand or pillow over the area. Your nurse or physiotherapist can show you how to do this effectively.
- Use your arms and legs to assist you as you move in the bed or when getting out of bed.

Remember: It may not be possible to get rid of all your pain, but it should be controlled so that you can cough and move comfortably while you are in hospital. Good pain management can reduce your hospital stay, so don't forget to always report if you are experiencing pain and to take your pain medication regularly.

Resources: The following resources on managing pain are available on-line, and you might find them helpful.

Beaumont Hospital Pain Management Patient Information Booklet: <http://www.beaumont.ie/media/Painmanagementbooklet1.pdf>

British Pain Society Patient Information Booklets: <https://www.britishpainsociety.org/people-with-pain/patient-publications/>

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are happy to receive all feedback.

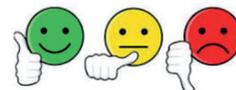
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The cover features a central diamond-shaped graphic with an orange border containing several circular images of human joints (hand, spine, hip, knee) with red highlights indicating pain. The background is a light blue and purple geometric pattern. In the top right corner is the Beaumont Hospital crest and name. On the left, a blue circle with a white 'i' is labeled 'Patient Information Leaflet'. At the bottom right, the text reads 'Department of Pain Management' and 'Coping with pain whilst you are in hospital' in large purple font. The draft number 'DRAFT 1 20092022' is at the very bottom.